PHARMACY

Sickroom seminar attracts large turnout

Chains do serious home health shopping

MILWAUKEE—A variety of drug store chains—both pioneers in home health care sales and newcomers to this burgeoning drug store category—were represented at Sickroom Service Inc.'s 16th annual seminar and exhibit, held here recently.

The two-day seminar attracted nearly 1,800 registrants from small, medium and large drug stores chains throughout the United States and Canada, as well as a significant number of independent druggists who serve as Sickroom Service dealers in their communities. Hundreds of health care professionals, including doctors, nurses and physical therapists, also attended the seminar's training workshops to learn more about the equipment, regulations and changing consumer needs in the fast-growing home health care market.

Over 150 manufacturers and distributors of durable and consumable medical supplies set up booths in the Milwaukee Exposition Center to display state-of-the-art home health care products at the conference.

"We were basically out there on a learning mission," said John Hight, vp for professional relations at Big B drug stores, a Birmingham, Ala.-based chain that expects to open its first freestanding home health care center later this year.

"It [home health care] is not a new area for us," Hight said. "But it definitely is something we are considering getting into in a much bigger way." He said Big B's first convalescent aids store will open by late summer in the Birmingham area.

Edward Pelant, director of professional services at Minneapolis-based Snyder Drug stores, said the conference's training seminars on marketing and management were especially helpful as he prepares plans for the opening of Snyder's first home health care center in the Twin Cities area.

"It was very clear after attending a number of these sessions that if you're going to get into this type of operation, you have to have qualified people to run it," he told *Drug Store News*. "It's obvious that this involves a lot more than running a pharmacy."

Pelant described his Milwaukee visit as a "fact-finding" mission for the eventual opening of Snyder's first home health care center.

"We have not opened a home health care center yet," he said. "But we are contemplating putting one in in the near future. There is a lot of opportunity in this business and it appears the independents are certainly getting into it more and more."

Burke McDonald, manager of Begley Drug's four convalescent aids stores in Kentucky, said the conference gave him an "opportunity to look, shop and compare new products" with Begley's existing convalescent aids mix.

However, like several other large chain representatives he described many of the training seminars as too elementary. "Many of the seminars they offered were geared for the independent who has convalescent aids as one segment of his business. For me, they were basically a review," he said. He suggested the show's sponsor develop two levels of training seminars, one for beginners and one for persons who are well-versed in convalescent aids products, services and issues.

Martin Belitz, professional services director at Toronto-based Shoppers Drug Mart, concurred with McDonald.

"The concept was good, but the delivery left me feeling a little short-changed," Belitz said. He too urged Sickroom Service to establish seminars that would address the more specialized needs of small and large chains that already place a heavy emphasis on the home health care category. SDM operates three home health centers in Ontario.

Ray Cadden, supervisor of the home health care departments in nine Rhode Island-based Douglas Drug stores, described the show as "well-run and super planned."

Erythromycin margins remain stable

Continued from page 25

price of scripts in the "all other" category advanced by $5.50, script prices for the overall category climbed 75¢ to $9.58.

With a 78% share of all scripts in the category, the top 25 products continue to play a significant role in the market. Erythromycins comprise 49% of the market, tetracyclines total 22%, and the "all other" category amounts to 22%. Vibramycin scripts have the balance.

No single firm has a dominant share of the erythromycin/tetracycline market. During the audit period, Abbott captured 24% of all scripts among the top 25 products dispensed. Upjohn had a 13% share; Parke Davis 9%; Lederle 6%, and Dista 5%.

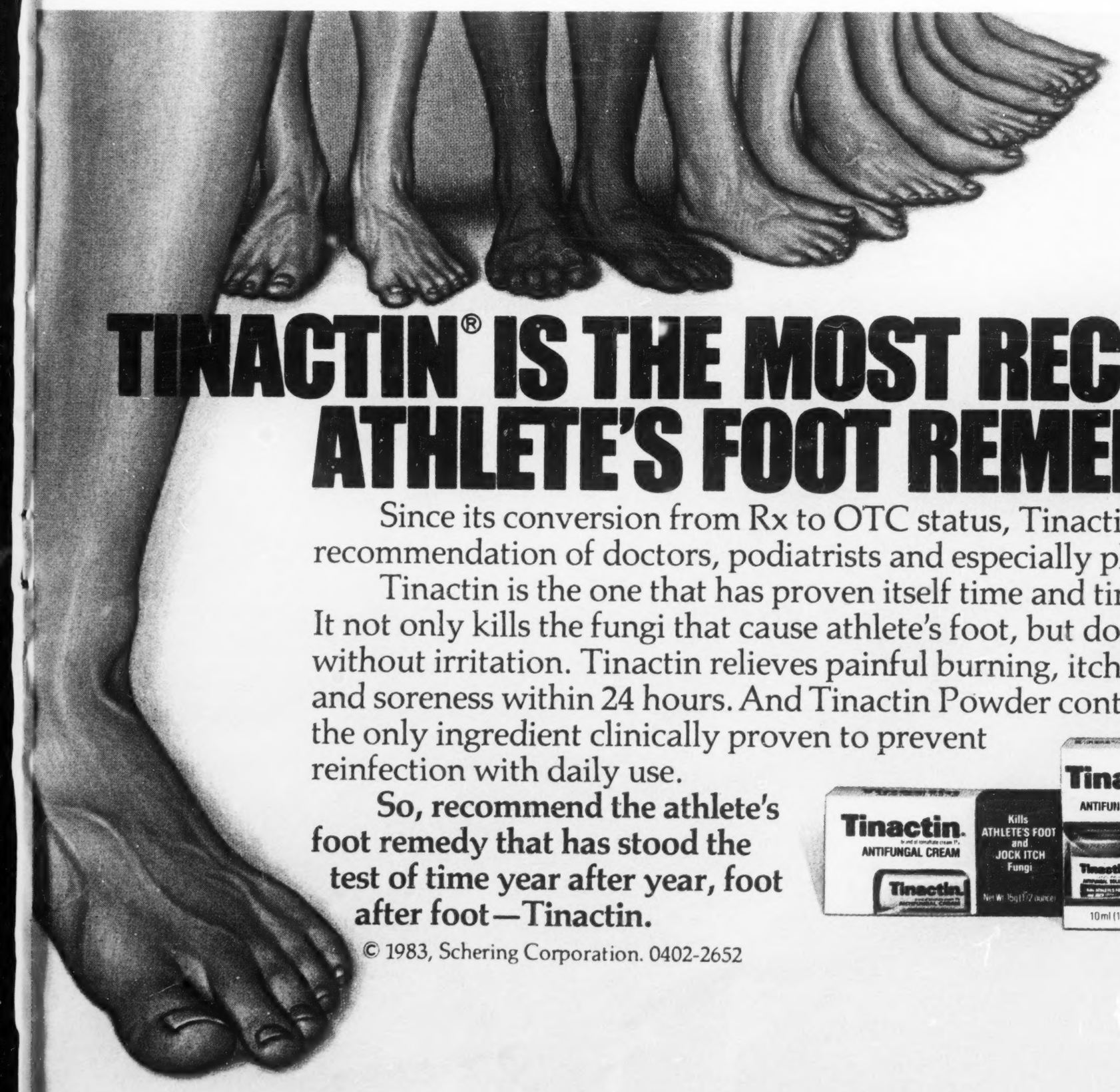
Pfizer chalked up a 7% share on the strength of Vibramycin Caps 100mg and Vibratabs 100mg.

Since no one product predominates in this market and since there's wide availability of multiple-source products, unbranded, lightly promoted drugs play a relatively minor role among the top 25 frequently dispensed erythromycin/tetracycline products.

For example, generic tetracycline scripts accounted for 5% of total script volume in the category. Scripts for unbranded erythromycins totaled 3%. Both percentages are relatively unchanged from previous years.

Low average refill rates indicate the products were predominantly used in acute care situations, as are most antibiotics. When products are used repeatedly, it may signify treatment of acne.

Average quantity prescribed on a typical script remained unchanged for most products in this category. When antibiotics are dispensed in large quantities, 50 or more per script, it usually indicates the product's use for treatment of chronic problems.



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Vol. 5 No. 15/Incorporating CHAIN STORE AGE Drug Magazine Published by Lebhar-Friedman Inc./July 11, 1983

Economic upsurge may spark '84 action

NEW YORK—The barn-burner economy that emerged in the second quarter of this year is not altering expansion plans at the major drug chains this year, but watch out for 1984.

Most chains have their plans for the rest of 1983 in place and running smoothly, but further lowering of interest rates could make more sites available next year as construction steams ahead.

Additional sales and profits already are flowing into the chains at a much faster rate than last year, and executives will soon be pressed for a place to put the extra cash flow.

The U.S. Commerce Department tells part of the story, reporting drug store sales for May were more than 7% better than the figures for May 1982. That continues a trend that has been followed for the entire first half of 1983.

Another part of the story is the rising profits reported by most chains. Since the end of 1982, earnings have been increasing faster than sales.

Peoples Drug in the second quarter increased net earnings 52% while sales increased 15%. At Pay 'n Save, net income for the quarter ended April 30 increased 175% on a sales gain of 12%. Begley's fiscal year ended March 31 with a net income increase of 252%.

There already has been some funneling of the new cash into new projects, such as the Crown Books venture of Thrifty and Dart. But will there be major moves throughout the industry like the acquisition fever of 1981?

Acquisition on hold

Not yet, said Al Towle, president and general manager of Gray Drug Fair.

"Our plans are already in place for this year. "It [the recovery] may affect next year because there will be more sites in the ground," he said.

Although most chain executives are predicting higher-priced acquisition targets next year, at least one chain—Perry—is taking an aggressive stand on acquisitions.

Donald Fox, president and coo of Perry Drug, said his chain is continuing to look at expanding its base of drug

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Shoppers worry less about OTC tampering

Since the introduction of tamper resistant packaging in 1982, consumer concern about safety features has diminished. Examples of the new packaging included the triple safety seal, blister packs, protective cans and shrink wraps.

WASHINGTON—Consumers are less likely to take precautionary steps when buying over-the-counter drugs this year than they were in 1982, according to a new Louis Harris Poll.

Based on a survey of 1,001 consumers, Harris pollsters concluded that 66% of those interviewed are "very concerned" about possible OTC drug tampering and 19% are "somewhat concerned."

While city dwellers (72%) and those with a high school education or less (72%) expressed the most concern, men (55%) and senior citizens (58%) worried the least about nonprescription drug tampering, the pollsters found.

Current concern over the safety of nonprescription drugs was prompted by last year's tampering incidents in which seven people died from cyanide-contaminated Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules.

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Boast high profits, high turns

Stickers heat up toy, card depts.

NEW YORK—Stickers, the latest craze among the country's preteens and teenagers, have become a hot-selling item in the greeting card and toy departments of chain drug stores.

Attracted by margins in the 50% range and a seemingly endless growing demand, drug retailers are increasing their assortment of stickers. The combination of low price points, high volume turnover and big margins have made them an ideal drug store item, many buyers say.

Whether stickers are just a passing fad is anyone's guess. But retailers and manufacturers have been impressed with the explosive growth of the product and its varied uses.

In addition to putting them on just about everything they own including books, toy boxes, bicycles and bulletin boards, kids have now begun collecting and trading stickers. They are also being used as incentives by parents and school teachers.

Some chains began selling stickers two years ago, while others only recently have become convinced of the potential of the market.

Erv Klebosits, Chicago district director of Medicare Glaser, said the chain just introduced a line of stickers in 10 out of 12 stores in Chicago. "We think they will outsell everything in the stationery department right now," said Klebosits.

He said Medicare-Glaser decided to test the stickers from a manufacturer that supplies the chain with two other lines of merchandise. The company, Mark I, manufactures greeting cards and personalized gift wrap as well as scratch 'n sniff and personalized stickers.

Klebosits said the chain teamed up with Mark I earlier this year. Two double spinner displays containing several lines of Mark I greeting cards and personalized wrapping paper were introduced in the stores. The results were encouraging, he said. Both lines moved very well.

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Drug chains are cashing in on the growing demand for the high-margin stickers.

Dart, Thrifty spin off Crown Books

NEW YORK—Dart Drug and Thrifty Drug are spinning off Crown Books into a public company with a 2.5-million-share stock offering at approximately $22 per share.

The offering, which is being underwritten by Prudential Bache, was expected to be made by mid-August.

Each of the drug chains owns 50% of the 130-store discount book chain. Following the offering, each drug chain will retain approximately 34% of the book chain, and the public will own 32%.

Of the $55 million that is expected to be generated by the stock offering, $20 million will be used to open approximately 150 additional stores and $5 million will be used to repay advances from Dart and Thrifty. The balance will be used for working capital and general corporate purposes. Most of the advance money from the two chains had been used for inventories.

Analysts said the offering could inflate the value of the two chains' stocks because a portion of Crown's earnings will be returned to them.

Dart's stock doubled in the month following the release of the prospectus on the chain's Trak Auto spinoff, which turned out to be one of the hottest new issues so far this year.

According to the Crown prospectus, net earnings have soared from $193,000 in 1979 to $865,000 in 1980 to $1.3 million in 1981 to $1.7 million in 1982 and $2.9 million in 1983.

Earnings per share have increased from 4¢ to 53¢ over the same period while sales rose from $6.3 million to $60.7 million.

Since 1979, the chain of 3,000-sq.-ft. stores has grown from 11 to 130 stores. Twenty

Continued on page 66

Sav-On scan test, delayed by snags, to start in July

ANAHEIM, Calif.—Sav-On will begin testing its grocery-type checkout scanning system in July instead of May as originally planned.

The 174-unit chain found more time than expected was needed to write a software program because drug store programming is new and more complex than supermarket or general merchandise software.

Sav-On, a division of the Jewel Company, is the first drug chain in the country to develop and finance its own checkout scanning system. Scan tests by five drug chains in Indiana and Massachusetts Revco, Hook, CVS, Peoples and Adams were developed and financed by a Chicago-based market research firm as part of product movement studies.

The IBM scan equipment, which arrived at Sav-On headquarters in January, has been tested at chain headquarters since then. The test store, which has seven checkstands, is 1½ miles from Sav-On headquarters and was selected so it could be closely monitored. Duration of the test is three to four months.

One of the bottlenecks to drug store scanners has been the lack of UPC-coded. About 50% of inventory is coded. Sav-On is converting its private label merchandise (20% of its inventory) to UPC codes, so it will go in with 70% of its total

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White Drug, H&BA chains to form new firm

JAMESTOWN, N.D.—White Drug is being merged with a chain of H&BA stores to form a new company, Drug Systems Inc., that generated pro forma sales of $90.3 million for the year ended April 2.

Thirty-four per cent of Drug Systems' shares will be made available to the public in a one-million share offering, with the remaining ownership to be evenly divided between Farm House Foods Corp. and Casa-Blanca Industries Inc.

Before the merger, White Drug had been a Farm House Foods subsidiary for 10 years. CasaBlanca had owned Wil-Car Enterprises Inc., which operated the H&BA chain and wholesaling business that is being merged with White Drug to form Drug Systems.

The new company will continue to operate Wil-Car and White as separate divisions and will add H&BA outlets as well as drug stores to the corporation, according to Roy D. Terracina, vp and treasurer.

After the stock offering, there will be $7 million available for the acquisition of chains and individual stores.

Although Drug Systems is based in Milwaukee, Terracina said expansion will not be limited to the Midwest. He added Drug Systems has no plans to put pharmacies into the Wil-Car stores.

Wil-Car will continue to operate its wholesaling business, which services 300 small- to medium-sized independent retail stores, out of its 360,000-sq.-ft. distribution center in Portsmouth, Ohio.

James D. Nowatzki, president of White Drug, said, "No changes in operation are planned for White Drug. Our growth has been good in the 10 years since we were acquired by Farm House. The only thing specially planned is our 100th anniversary as a drug chain, which will be next year."

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News in brief

NACDS exec to step down

NEW YORK—Kathleen McGee, vice president at the National Assocation of Chain Drug Stores, is leaving the organization to take a new position as executive director of the fledgling Retail Drug Institute here in September.

Kathleen McGee

Established by the Arnold and Marie Schwartz College of Pharmacy of Long Island University, the institute's goals focus on training personnel for marketing and merchandising within retail pharmacy.

"My function will be administrative," says McGee. "We plan to promote, develop, and educate retail management personnel."

At NACDS since 1973, McGee progressed from director of professional services to vice president. Her initial responsibilities centered on running pharmacy programs and coordinating pharmacy association positions with the profession's many other groups.

Before joining NACDS, McGee was the executive director of the Delaware Pharmaceutical Assocation, a statewide organization of pharmacists.

Peoples to review hearing centers

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—Peoples Drug Stores will review results of newly opened hearing aid centers in the optical centers of three Washington-area Peoples stores before deciding whether to continue its newest venture in expanded health care services.

Peoples has hired a certified audiologist to staff the three centers, all located in suburban Peoples Drug Stores. The hearing aid centers will function as an extension of the chain's in-store optical departments.

"We're putting our toe in the water with these three units," said Peoples spokesman Joe Pollard. "It's not really a big commitment, but if they work out, we will no doubt want to expand the program."

Hearing tests will be administered in one of the examination rooms constructed as part of the optical centers. Hearing aid equipment and supplies will be available for sale at each center.

Harris Wholesale to acquire Southeast

SOLON, Ohio—The Harris Wholesale Drug Co. has agreed to acquire the Southeast Wholesale Drug Co. of Miami, Fla.

Terms of the purchase were not disclosed, and the final agreement was not expected to be completed until late this month. Estimated annual sales for Southeast are between $18 million and $20 million.

Harris Wholesale Drug Co. is privately held and does not disclose annual sales. However, the new division created by the acquisition of Southeast is expected to service between 10% and 15% of Harris' 2,500 accounts.

Harris services independent drug retailer and hospitals in Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York.

After the acquisition, the Southeast Wholesale Drug Co. will become the Southeast division of Harris.

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Vol. 5, No. 15 July 11, 1983

Wayne H. Roberts

Patrick W. Tupa

Dennis R. O'Dell

Walgreens promotes four execs

Dwight E. Iverson

DEERFIELD, Ill.—Walgreens has promoted Wayne H. Roberts to director of marketing coordination, where he will replace Frank Ziemann, who recently retired after 36 years

Roberts, who joined Walgreens in 1965 as a management trainee, had been manager of distribution.

The chain also promoted Dennis R. O'Dell to manager of Intercom Pharmacy Operations, where he will direct the operation and continued installation of Intercom, the chain's computerized pharmacy system. Intercom is in 600 of the 900 drug stores and will be chainwide by the end of the year.

O'Dell, who joined the chain in 1968, had been pharmacy supervisor for the Memphis district.

In other promotions, Patrick W. Tupa was named property manager and Dwight E. Iverson was named divisional merchandise manager for candy, tobacco and convenience foods.

Tupa, who had been a real estate representative for Walgreens.

Pay 'n Save expands nutrition ctr. tests

SEATTLE—After testing Health Spectrum (McKesson's nutrition center concept) in two stores for seven months, Pay 'n Save is expanding the tests to five more stores in the Seattle area in July and August.

"The reason for the additional test stores," according to Jim Agopsowicz, Pay 'n Save's OTC drug merchandiser, "is that for the past two months the original test stores have been profitable."

Agopsowicz told *Drug Store News* that "as a result of having a complete track on sales, we have made some changes. The size of the section—originally 15 to 20 ft. on one gondola side—has been trimmed to a maximum of 12 ft.

"In one test store we displayed skin care items in cosmetics, and in the other store we displayed them in the nutrition center. We have now moved skin care to cosmetics because that's where they have sold the best."

Another change is the elimination of herbs. Agopsowicz says he is puzzled by their failure to move as expected.

Protein powders (five or six were carried) have been sliced to two. "Interestingly," says Agopsowicz, "we solicited body-building shops, but found that these places were selling their own protein powder.

"We have also cut back on our national brands of natural vitamins [Thompson, Schiff and Plus]. In fact, we are cutting back on any item that's not selling up to our expectations."

One thing Pay 'n Save is not changing is the home for Health Spectrum. The gondola is in front of the pharmacy, across the aisle from Pay 'n Save's regular vitamins which include national brands as well as Pay 'n Save's natural and synthetic private labels.

Health Spectrum works on 35% to 40% margin vs. 50% to 60% for health food stores in order to impact a price image and thereby lure shopers.

Pay 'n Save's original projection on turnover was four and a half to six the first six months. "Our first two test stores now exceed six," Agopsowicz said.

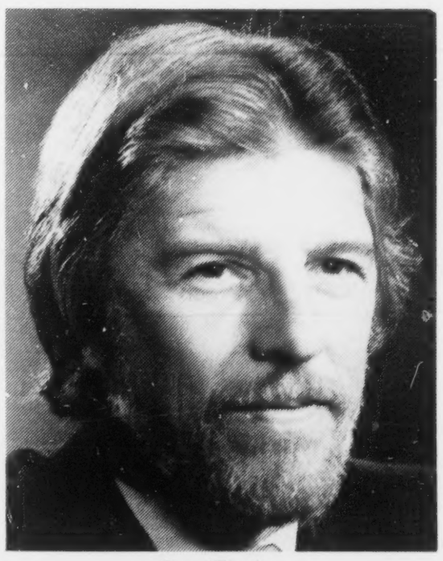
Forbes new DrSN *publisher*

Lebhar-Friedman Inc. has named Jay Forbes to the post of publisher of *Drug Store News*. Forbes, a 20-year Lebhar-Friedman veteran, will retain his post as group publisher with the company.

David Q. Mahler, vp and group publisher, announced the appointment.

After a three-year stint at *Photographic Trade News*, Forbes joined Lebhar-Friedman in 1963 as eastern sales representative for *Chain Store Age Supermarket Edition*. Since that time he has gained extensive publishing and retailing experience by holding positions that include national advertising sales manager for *Chain Store Age Drug Edition*, publication director for *Discount Store News* and director of corporate planning.

Most recently, he was publisher of both *Chain Store Age Supermarkets* and *Food Merchandising*.



Jay Forbes

"I'm excited to be back in the drug industry. It's challenging, ever-changing and a vital part of the nation's economy," commented Forbes.

Photography promo clicks for Gray Drug

CLEVELAND—Photofinishing customers at Gray Drug Fair stores now get two sets of "luster-finish" prints for each order, as well as guaranteed on-time delivery in the chain's new "Take 2" photofinishing program.

Introduced earlier this year in the chain's 401 stores, the "Take 2" program has greatly increased photo-finishing volume from both new and existing customers, the chain's director of merchandising for general merchandise Bob Morick said. "The program is doing very, very well," Morick said. "In fact, it's doing much better than any program we've ever run before."

Morick said results of an independent consumer survey conducted for Gray Drug Fair

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Chains increase local TV ad budgets by 54%

NEW YORK—Drug chains increased local television advertising budgets by an average 54% during the first quarter of 1983, the Television Bureau of Advertising reports.

During the January to March 1983 period, chains purchased $10.5 million worth of local television time, compared to $6.8 million in the same period last year. The increase represented the largest percentage change among any of the top 20 categories of local retail television advertisers, the association said.

Eckerd, the leading chain drug buyer of electronic advertising, spent $2.4 million in the first quarter of the year, up 61% over the $1.5 million allocated for the same period in 1982. Only two other retailers, Sears Roebuck & Co. and Dayton-Hudson Corp., had a bigger percentage change in local television advertising dollars in the first quarter of 1983.

Eckerd is ranked as the 24th largest local retail television advertiser in the country.

A close second to Eckerd was Revco, which boosted its advertising for the first quarter by a hefty 302% to $1.1 million.

The most dramatic single increase for the quarter was from Page Drugs in Dallas. The chain's budget was up 1,065% over the first quarter of 1982. Page's total television advertising budget for the first quarter this year was $188,700.

Another chain that posted a significant increase during the first quarter was Gray Drug Fair. The Cleveland-based chain expanded electronic advertising outlays by an estimated 280% to nearly $500,000. The Gray Drug division showed the biggest increase with television advertising going up 471% to $265,000. Drug fair expenditures were up 104% to $230,000.

According to Harry Steck, senior vp of marketing at Gray Drug Fair, the chain will continue to place a heavy emphasis on television advertising for the remainder of the year. He said the media mix of television and print has lent considerable support to the chain's image-building program.

At Peoples Drug Stores, local television advertising increased by an average 225%. The T.B.A., which still reports Haag's advertising expenditures separately from Peoples, said the chain raised its television budget by 474% to $205,500 in the first quarter of this year. During that period Peoples converted 37 of its Haag units in Indianapolis to the Peoples logo. Local television advertising for Peoples overall declined 24% to $470,600.

West Coast drug chains were led by Thrifty, which is third among drug chains in local television advertising. During the first quarter, Thrifty spent $744,200, 22% more than the first quarter in 1982.

Long's posted a 17% increase for a total of $400,000 worth of local television advertising.

Sav-On Drugs allocated $277,500 for television, a 4% decrease from the first quarter of a year ago. Also cutting back on television was Pay 'n Save, which spent 24% less than last year for a total of $285,300.

Top 15 drug chain local TV advertisers

Chain	1st qtr. expenditures	% change from '82
1. Eckerd	$2,360,600	+ 61%
2. Revco	1,098,100	+ 302
3. Thrifty	744,200	+ 22
4. Walgreens	652,100	+ 25
5. Thrift	639,200	+ 110
6. Peoples	470,600	– 24
7. CVS	466,500	+ 64
8. Long's	400,000	+ 17
9. Pay 'n Save	285,300	– 24
10. Sav-On	277,500	– 4
11. Gray	265,000	+ 471
12. Hook	243,400	– 21
13. Drugfair	230,800	+ 104
14. Haag	205,500	+ 105
15. Page	188,700	+ 1,065

Source: Television Bureau of Advertising

Advertising upped

Walgreens and Thrift Drugs continue to be heavy television advertisers. Walgreens, ranked fourth in the list of top 15 drug chain TV advertisers, spent $652,100 in the first quarter, up 25% from a year ago. Thrift, ranked fifth behind Walgreens, upped its local TV time buys by 110% to $639,200.

In addition to Eckerd, The Kroger Co., the parent company of SupeRx, and American Stores Co., which operates Rea & Derick and Skaggs, were among the top 25 local retail television advertisers for the first quarter. As a corporation, Kroger ranked 11th on the list and reported a 32% increase in local TV time for a total of $3.1 million. American Stores, collectively ranked 14th, reduced its local television advertising expenditures by 17% to $4.8 million in the first quarter of 1983.

Overall, drug chains are listed 14th among the top 20 categories of local television advertisers. The largest categories include restaurants and drive-ins, food stores and supermarkets, banks, auto dealers, furniture stores and department stores.

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Bolger receives honorary degree

BOSTON—Robert J. Bolger, president of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, has been awarded an honorary degree of doctor of science in pharmacy by the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences.

In his commencement address to 120 graduates receiving their B.A. degrees and 20 graduates receiving advanced degrees, Bolger congratulated the college for its emphasis on computer competence for all students and faculty members.

"Computers are becoming crucial to the practice of pharmacy," he said.

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